

Russia says UNRWA mission must continue in Palestinian territories



(File photo) Social work teams from UNRWA organize activities for children and families next to

damaged buildings in the Gaza Strip.

Moscow, February 2 (RHC)-- Russia says Israel's legislation banning the main UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) from operating in the occupied territories will have serious humanitarian consequences for the Palestinians.

An Israeli law adopted in October bans operations by UNRWA on the Israeli-occupied Palestinian territories—including al-Quds— and contact with the regime's authorities from January 30th.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Saturday that the ban is an arbitrary step that deserves condemnation. The ban, it said, will have "the most serious humanitarian consequences for the Palestinians." "This means that hundreds of thousands of children, women, and the elderly are at risk of being abandoned to their fate."

Russia's foreign ministry said that the Kremlin was "convinced that the UNRWA mission...should be continued until the final peaceful settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which provides for the creation of an independent sovereign state of Palestine."

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, which is considered the backbone of humanitarian operations for Palestinians, provides aid to some six million Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria.

UNRWA told a media briefing in Geneva over the weekend that humanitarian needs in the Gaza Strip remained "immense" despite an increased flow of aid into the territory following the ceasefire which took effect on January 19th. It also said that the agency was committed to continuing its work in Gaza despite the regime's forces' hostility towards its staff.

According to the agency's chief Philippe Lazzarini, at least 273 UNRWA staff were killed in the Gaza Strip and the occupied West Bank during Israel's brutal campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

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